



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 31 July 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
31 JULY 1968

1. Czechoslovakia -
Soviet Union

There is still nothing substantive out of the meeting in Cierna. Both sides say the talks have been "frank and comradely," which is the Communist way of saying that disagreement is serious but not total. The Soviet military build-up opposite Czechoslovakia continues relentlessly.

2. Mexico

Student demonstrations continued into the evening yesterday. [redacted] the government's severe countermeasures have united the student body behind the demonstrators. The students are likely to become even more bitter when they learn that several demonstrators were killed. The government has so far managed to suppress this information.

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We see little chance that the government will modify its tough line. It continues to charge that Communists are at the root of the troubles [redacted]

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The government closed the university yesterday, but university officials--many of whom seem to sympathize with the students--plan to reopen it today.

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3. Bolivia

In a characteristically headlong reaction to his current troubles, Barrientos has named a largely military cabinet whose members are distinguished by their loyalty to him and by little else. The make-up of the new team has angered his civilian supporters; his failure to consult the high command has alienated the military as well. Some military officers have begun talking about a coup, and civilian opposition groups are trying to rally antigovernment sentiment.

Barrientos is still ahead of his slow-moving critics, and our embassy believes he has begun to get his emotions back under control. It thinks he will be able to re-establish his dialogue with the principal power centers in Bolivia and find a way out of the present crisis. He is by no means out of the woods yet, however.

4. Algeria-Israel

The Algerians apparently are in a real dilemma over the hijacked Israeli airliner. They probably would prefer to let the plane and its remaining passengers go away quietly, but the Palestinian exile groups are pressing them to insist on some kind of concession from Israel. Moreover,

[redacted] believe that as soon as the plane is safe the Israelis will take retaliatory action against Egypt, the most prominent backer of the Palestinians.

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The cabinet will meet in Algiers tomorrow. Current indications are that the Algerians may risk the criticism of their fellow Arabs and come out with a somewhat less intransigent line.

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5. Southern Yemen

Anti-American feeling is being whipped up in Aden by inflammatory broadcasts as the leftist government thrashes about for a scapegoat for the current unrest. The city is calm but tense, with a risk of demonstrations. The small US mission cannot expect strong protection from local security forces, which themselves are divided in their support of the government.

6. World Youth Festival

The Youth Festival is proving a handful for the hosts. When Bulgarian officials confiscated a truckload of Czech stationery and press handouts, the inventive Czechs began sending press invitations on Bulgarian toilet paper. At the opening parade on Sunday, a Czechoslovak group stopped in front of the reviewing stand and chanted "Our democracy is our affair" in Bulgarian at the assembled dignitaries.

Arab delegations chanted anti-Israeli slogans, and some Arab groups have not turned up at all, apparently because an Israeli delegation is present. The Israelis, the Czechs, and the Yugoslavs got a cool reception inside the stadium, but streetside spectators in Sofia greeted the Czechs warmly.

Strong-arm methods may be necessary if the Bulgarians are to keep even a semblance of order and unanimity, particularly if touchy questions of youthful restlessness in and out of the Communist world come to the surface.

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The Bulgarians even got themselves in a box on the supposedly noncontroversial issue of Vietnam. They used the militia to turn back a group of West European "new leftists" who wanted to stage an antiwar rally in front of the US Embassy on Monday. For their trouble they heard the group's leader say the demonstration was also a protest against the lack of free discussion at the festival.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

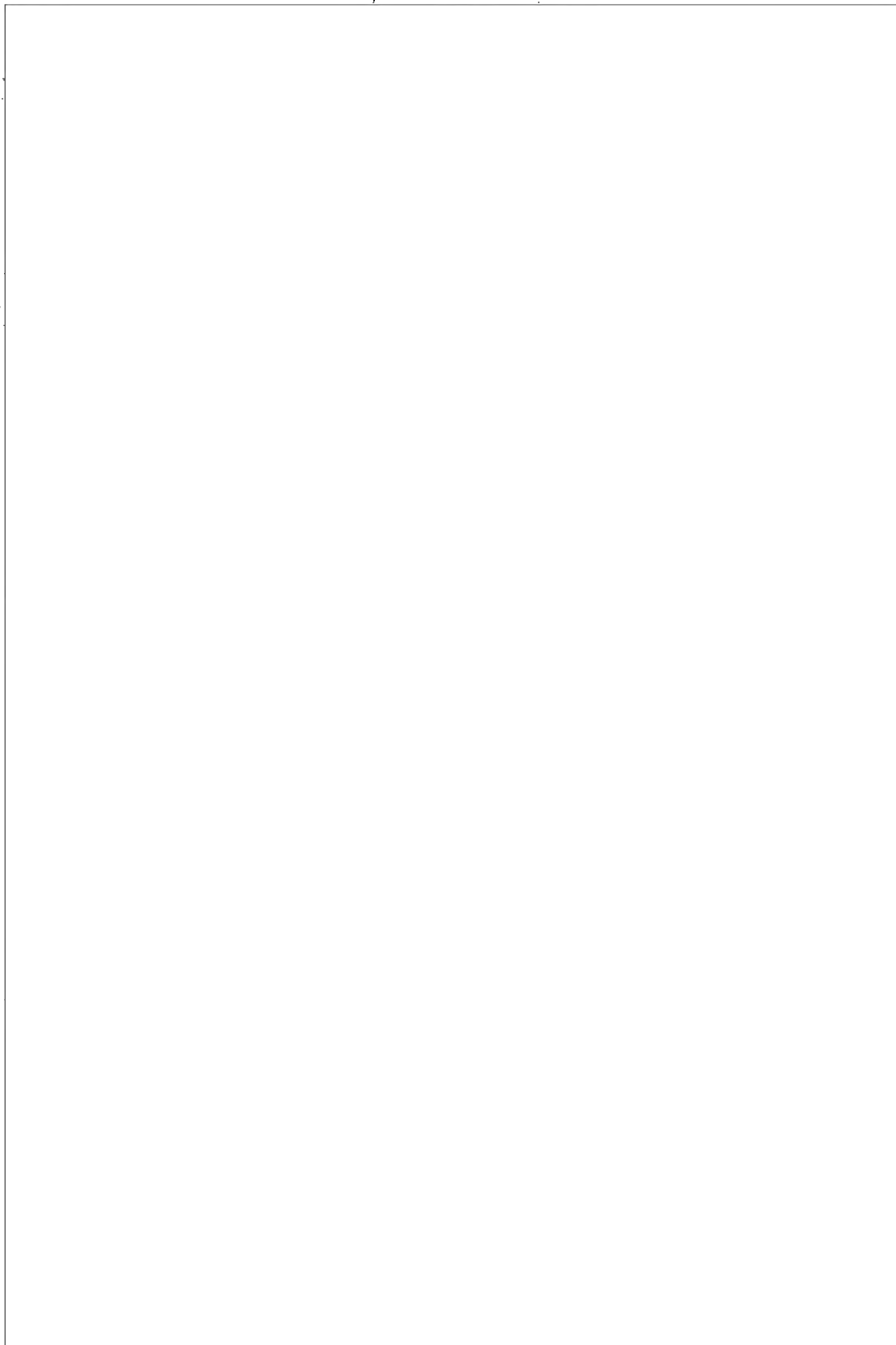
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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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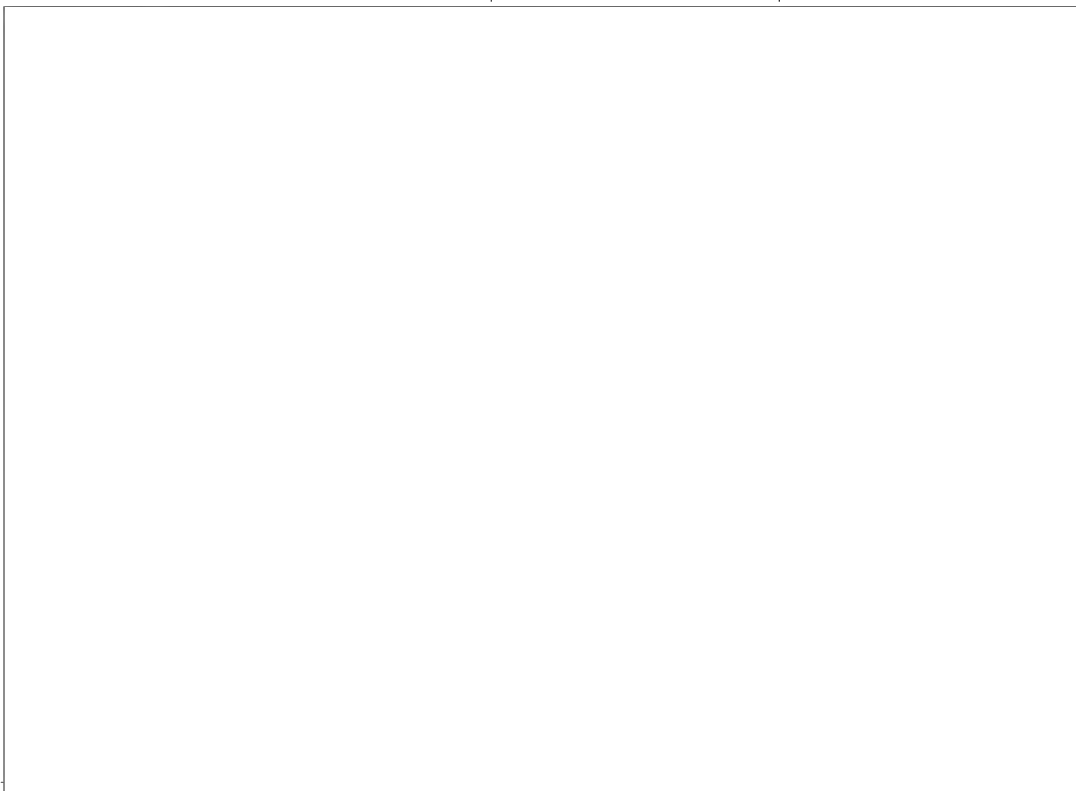
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Indian Team to Vietnam: A six-man team of Indian officials from the ministries of External Affairs, Defense, and Finance is scheduled to arrive in Saigon this week on an inspection mission to North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Two members, including External Affairs Secretary T. N. Kaul, have obtained visas for Hanoi.

The Indian "inspection" is apparently a check into the administration of International Control Commission activities. Kaul's trip to Hanoi, however, could be of additional significance. As India's senior official supervising Indian policy for Southeast Asia, Kaul has been actively promoting plans for a behind-the-scenes Indian effort aimed at mediating a settlement of the Vietnam conflict.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report
today.

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